

As of: April 3, 2000

## **Status Report of the Washington State Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission**

### **Overview**

The Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission was created by the 1999 Legislature to develop and implement accountability and assistance systems for Washington's schools and school districts. The nine member commission was appointed by Governor Gary Locke based on nominations from the Legislature and other individuals and organizations. It includes a teacher, a principal, a school district superintendent, an educational researcher, a retired banker, a business executive, an attorney, and the state Superintendent of Public Instruction. At this point in time, there is one position vacant. All of the appointed members of the commission have children, or have had children, in public schools in Washington and in other states.

Major duties and responsibilities of the commission include: 1) developing criteria for identifying successful schools and districts and those in need of assistance; 2) setting school and district performance goals; 3) setting the "cut-scores" that students must achieve on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning to meet the standards; and 4) developing recommendations for providing assistance to struggling schools and districts, including a process and strategies for intervening in schools and districts in which low performance persists over an identified period of time.

As of the mid-March 2000, the commission has conducted six meetings. An additional seven full-commission meetings are scheduled for 2000. Also, the commission has three subcommittees that meet approximately two times a month, and plans to conduct a series of public meetings across the state during June, July, and August 2000 to obtain comments on the commission's preliminary recommendations to the 2001 Legislature.

### **Who are the members?**

Substitute Senate Bill 5418 specified that the commission is to include nine individuals who "...are supportive of educational improvement, who have a positive record of public service, and who will devote sufficient time to the responsibilities of the commission to ensure that the objectives of the commission are achieved." The legislation also requires that the commission have a balance of individuals from within and outside the public education system.

Members of the commission include the Superintendent of Public Instruction and eight members appointed by the Governor. Four of the Governor's appointments were required to be selected from lists submitted by each Caucus (Republican and Democrat) of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Terms of members range from two to four years.

Commission members include:

Patrick Patrick, Chair	Seattle	Retired Banker
Jose Gaitan, Vice-chair	Seattle	Attorney
Terry Bergeson	Olympia	Superintendent of Public Instruction
Margaret Bates	Vancouver	Teacher
Patricia Lines	Seattle	Education Researcher/Attorney
Lee Schmit	Tacoma	Principal
David Shaw	Pasco	School District Superintendent
Jim Spady	Snoqualmie Pass	Business Executive
Vacant		

Biographies and contact information for the commission members are included in the Appendix.

### What are the commission's duties and responsibilities?

The commission's duties and responsibilities are specified in Sections 2 and 3 of Substitute Senate Bill 5418. They include:

Action	Due Date
<b>GOALS/TARGETS</b>	
<b>Performance improvement goals:</b> Adopt and revise performance improvement goals in reading, writing, science, and mathematics by subject and grade level as the commission deems appropriate.	On-going
<b>Assessment "cut-scores":</b> Identify the scores students must achieve in order to meet standards on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Also determine student scores for levels of student performance below and above the standard.	When assessments are initially administered. Science assessments are next.
<b>SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>Successful schools/districts:</b> Adopt objective, systematic criteria to identify successful schools and school districts.	Not specified.
<b>INCENTIVES/REWARDS</b>	
<b>Performance incentive systems:</b> Identify performance incentive systems that have improved, or have the potential to improve, student achievement.	Not specified.
<b>Reward recommendations:</b> Recommend policies to the Legislature and others regarding rewards for successful schools/districts.	By September 5, 2000.

<b>TARGETED AND GENERAL ASSISTANCE</b>	
<b>Schools/districts needing assistance:</b> Adopt objective, systematic criteria to identify schools and school districts in need of assistance.	By September 5, 2000.
<b>Additional assistance recommendations:</b> Recommend policies to the Legislature and others regarding additional assistance measures for students and schools.	By September 5, 2000.
<b>INTERVENTION</b>	
<b>Schools/districts persistently failing:</b> Adopt objective, systematic criteria to identify schools and school districts in which significant numbers of students persistently fail to meet state standards.	By September 5, 2000.
<b>State intervention strategies recommendations:</b> Recommend policies to the Legislature and others pertaining to a graduated series of increasingly intensive state intervention strategies for schools and school districts in which low-performance persists over an identified period of time. Also, recommend any statutory changes necessary to give SPI the authority to implement the state intervention strategies.	By September 5, 2000.
<b>Intervention Decisions:</b> Identify specific schools and districts in which state intervention measures are needed and a range of appropriate intervention strategies.	No earlier than June 30, 2001, and only after Legislative authorization.
<b>STATEWIDE REPORTING</b>	
<b>Reporting system:</b> Annually review the assessment reporting system to ensure fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and equity of opportunity and make recommendations to SPI for needed improvements.	Annually.
<b>Goal progress:</b> Report to the Legislature on the progress made in achieving the 4 <sup>th</sup> grade reading goal and any additional goals adopted by the commission.	December 1, 2000, and by December 1st thereafter.
<b>OTHER</b>	
<b>Other policy recommendations:</b> Recommend other accountability policies to the Legislature and others as determined by the commission.	By September 5, 2000.
<b>Annual Commission status report:</b> Report to the Legislature, the Governor, SPI, and State Board of Education (SBE) on the progress, findings, and recommendations of the commission. The report may include recommendations of actions to help improve student achievement.	December 1 <sup>st</sup> , annually.
<b>Coordination, advice, hearings, and staff:</b> Coordinate activities with the SBE and OSPI, seek advice from the public and all interested educational organizations, establish advisory committees, hold meetings/ public hearings, and hire necessary staff.	Ongoing.

Two timelines that include milestones for completing the commission's duties and responsibilities. These timelines are shown in the appendix.

Meeting dates for 2000 are:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Topic</b>
January 6	SeaTac	Successful schools/districts recognition and incentives
February 7	Olympia	Assistance for schools/districts
March 6	Tacoma	Assistance/intervention strategies
April 10	SeaTac	Assistance/intervention strategies
May 1	SeaTac	Preliminary recommendation options
June 5	SeaTac	Decide on preliminary recommendations
June – July	Workshops across the state	Request comments on preliminary recommendations
August 14	SeaTac	Decide on recommendations to the Legislature
October 2	Spokane	To be determined
November 6	SeaTac	To be determined
December 4	SeaTac	To be determined

**What has the Commission accomplished to date?**

As indicated earlier, the commission has met four times. At these four meetings the commission:

.. Analyzed and discussed:

- its duties and responsibilities
- options for defining a “successful” school and district
- options for providing incentives for students, schools, and school districts
- the current reporting system and data gaps;

- .. Heard from the Governor, chair of the Senate Education Committee, Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Education Committee, and the Co-chairs of the House Education Committee;
- .. Adopted “Accountability System Principles,” which are included in the appendix;
- .. Adopted commission “Operating Guidelines;”
- .. Was briefed on the problems that occurred with the scoring of the writing component of the 1999 Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Briefings have also been held on assistance and intervention systems in other states and the Kentucky “value-added” accountability model;
- .. Discussed with four principals what is occurring in schools as a result of state-level education reform efforts;
- .. Established three subcommittees: Successful Schools and Performance Incentives; Reporting and Information; and Assistance and Intervention. These subcommittee each contain approximately twenty individuals and include teachers, principals, parents, superintendents, business representatives, classified staff, college professors, and an ESD Superintendent. The subcommittees are meeting twice a month, and will have approximately twenty meetings between January and May 2000;
- .. Hired an Executive Director, a Research Analyst, and an Administrative Assistant; and
- .. Created a Web Page to inform the public of its deliberations.

### **How can further information be obtained?**

Information concerning the commission may be obtained on the World-wide Web at [www.k12.wa.us/accountability](http://www.k12.wa.us/accountability). The Web Page includes meeting locations and dates, agendas, information and meeting summaries of prior meetings, links to other sites containing information on assistance and accountability, and other pertinent information.

The commission’s staff may be contacted at:

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Contact information for the members are included in the Appendix.

## **Appendix**

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- .. Contact information for members
- .. Biographies of members
- .. Commission Timelines
- .. Accountability System Principles
- .. Summary of SSB 5418
- .. Excerpts of SSB 5418 that established the Commission